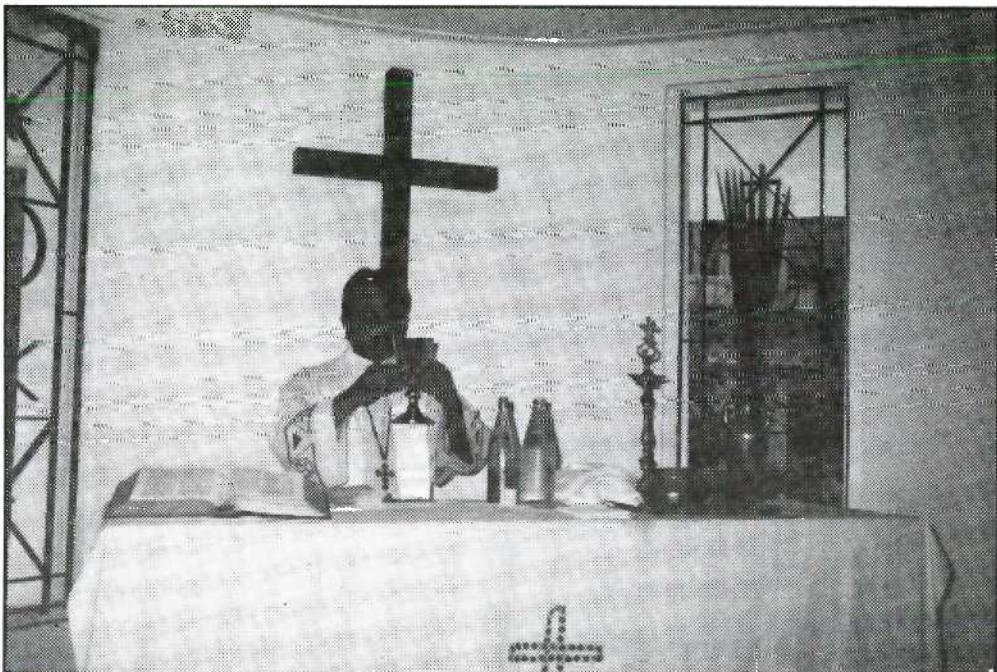


YOUTH NEWSLETTER

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION/DCC YOUTH DESK

No. 26

June 1989



Rev. Fidelcastro Quintana, the Philippines, during the closing celebration of the Workshop on Youth and Worship in Asia

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Editors:
Julius Filo, Coordinator of the LWF Youth Program
Birgitta Voltenauer, Secretary

E D I T O R I A L
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Therefore I urge you... in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing, perfect will.

(Romans 12, 1-2)

Dear Sister, dear Brother in Christ Jesus,

Each of us has known situations when we say to ourselves: I can't anymore, I am tired, I am fed up, I have no more energy. In such a situation it does not always help to take a rest, have a day or two off, go to bed early in the evening and try to forget about all the problems. Some people think that young people are better off in this respect. It is not easy to exhaust their enthusiasm. But many of us, who in our societies are still considered to be young, would state the opposite. Our "batteries" can also run down, we can also get passive, disappointed, unable to act...

What does all of this depend on? How to secure a regular supply of new energy so that, because our spirit is still full of hope, it is enough to rest for a short time when we are feeling exhausted? It seems that in this respect the old mechanical rules applied in physics still dominate: energy cannot be created, we have to receive it from a source in order to be able to use it...

This year 1989 seems to be the last one in another period of the LWF Youth and Students Program. This year, besides the great task of preparing ourselves for the next Assembly and thus also for the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference, we have planned two activities which have to do with "the supply of energy for the youth work".

One of them has already taken place: "The Workshop on Youth and Worship in Asia". This regional workshop (and other ones in other regions) were already proposed at the time of the last Assembly in Budapest in order to point out the need for a close relationship between Youth and Worship. Only if youth draws on the spiritual energy coming out of worship, can our youth ministries in different churches be really fruitful. If you read carefully, you will probably find footprints of this truth in several of the reports in this issue. Youth ministry without regular contact with the source of God's grace would soon be exhausted and become only one of many organizations quickly running out of its own energy. In connection with worship we have our clear identity. We cannot forget that through the love given to us in Jesus Christ we are the beloved children of God. For our youth ministry worship can be such a living, energy-supplying link.

I know that when you read these lines there are many questions in your minds. Worship should serve in such a way. But does it really? Does it give us an energy which can be used in actions of love - actions for more justice and peace based on eternal grounds? Does it really give our youth an energy which cannot be kept only for private use but which always leads

us with increased strength to the communion with others? Our discussions on worship and youth reveal the many tasks which are before us in order to improve this relationship.

Our other attempts in different fields of youth ministry also indicate urgent concerns, often showing a need for new energy, which we cannot get through a short rest, a good night's sleep only, but which can only come from a very special source...

I know, dear friend in Christ, that there will be many questions and many reactions from your own particular perspective when you read some of the contributions in this issue. I would like to invite you to find the courage and time to express your hopes in an article, or maybe even tell us about functioning models of youth work in your congregation or youth group which other youth could learn about through our Youth Newsletter. We need to help each other to secure a permanent link for our youth to the source of God's grace so that our energy will never run out.

Yours,
Julius

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NOTES FROM OUR DESK

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Past Activities:

Since the last issue of the Youth Newsletter the international LWF youth program was involved in the following activities:

1. On January 10-12 a meeting was organized in Geneva by various Christian networks to prepare for the youth program during the European Assembly on Peace with Justice in Basel (May 1989).
2. On February 1-5, 1989 the second meeting of the LWF Ad hoc Youth Committee took place in Geneva. All members of the committee attended (North America was represented by Christine Selbstedt, Canada). Rev. Raul Denuncio, President of the host church of the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) in Argentina, was also present for part of the meeting. Also present were: Mr. Karl Anderson, USA, consultant, and Mr. Matti Peiponen, Finland, intern at the Youth Desk.

The committee finalized the preparation of the content of PAYC and advised the Youth Desk staff on some of the open questions of a practical nature. The meeting also proposed a quota system of the participants and reviewed the budget of the PAYC.

Since this group has been assigned to advise the Youth Desk in the implementation of its program, it has reviewed the program during the last period, compared it with the recommendations of the last Assembly. They also proposed a meeting of those presently serving as youth representatives in the various LWF governing bodies to meet prior to the PAYC in Buenos Aires and evaluate their participation in these bodies for the purpose of better planning for the future.

The next meeting of this group will take place in Buenos Aires prior to the PAYC to make the final preparations for the PAYC.

3. On March 4-10, 1989 an LWF Workshop on Youth and Worship took place in Madras, India (see report in this issue). The Asian participants also visited several churches in India.
4. The Commission on Church Cooperation held its annual meeting in Rome, Italy on April 4-14, 1989. Since this was the final meeting prior the LWF Assembly in 1990, it not only evaluated the past year and prepared for next year's work of the Youth and Students Program, but also reviewed the 5 year report and made proposals for the period beyond the Assembly.

For the Youth and Students Program 1990 (in which year there will be a change of youth coordinator, since the present one is leaving on July 31, 1990) the following activities will still be organized by the present staff:

- follow-up work of the PAYC and the Assembly (reports, video...);

- Study/visitation team to Nepal to study the attractiveness of Eastern religions to a large number of youth (especially from Europe and North America);
- A consultation on the future of the youth program (evaluation of the results of the Assembly and the PAYC from the point of view of youth representatives).

For the future (beyond the Assembly), the CCC proposed a study program which should draw positive learning experiences from the attractiveness of other religions and spiritual movements (with different regional emphases) to our youth for future improvement of the youth ministry of our churches. (We would be grateful if you would like to become involved in this thinking process on the future of our program. If requested by you, we would send you the respective recommendation of the CCC for your comments.) As you probably will understand, at this stage this recommendation is mainly a contribution to an open discussion, since the program for youth will be created by the responsible bodies established by the next Assembly.

5. In connection with the Latin American Pre-Assembly in Bogotá, Colombia on May 15 - 20, 1989, a group of 12 youth representatives of the Latin American churches had several separate meetings. (See report in this issue).
6. A meeting with the Local Preparatory Committee for the PAYC in Argentina took place in José C. Paz, Argentina on May 12 - 13, 1989. The Youth Coordinator participated on behalf of the LWF staff. Different parts of the preparation concerning the input coming from Argentina were discussed, as well as many practical details concerning the meeting.



The members of the Local Preparatory Committee in Argentina

7. Since February 1989 two interns are serving in the LWF Headquarters for a one year period:

Ms. Carolyn Decke, FRG, in the Assembly Office, assigned with editing of German documents for the Assembly (see personal introduction in this issue);

Mr. Matti Peiponen, Finland, at the Youth Desk, assigned with assisting in the preparation of the PAYC in Buenos Aires, Argentina (see personal introduction in this issue).

8. Both of the above interns have participated in the European Assembly on Peace with Justice in Basel, Switzerland. One of their responsibilities was to coordinate an LWF stand informing participants on LWF peace related activities (see separate report on this activity in this issue).

9. We are now in the process of collecting registration forms for the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference. Invitations were sent out to the churches on March 20, 1989, however, many of them have remained unanswered so far. Could you check on this with the leadership of your church?

Future Activities:

1. The LWF Workshop on Youth and Worship in Europe under the theme: "Worship - Source of Renewal" with 31 participants will take place in Château de Bossey, Switzerland on June 25 - July 1, 1989.
2. A 2-member delegation will attend the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students which will gather about 20,000 youth from all over the world in Pyongyang, North Korea, on July 1 - 8, 1989.
3. A small LWF youth delegation will attend the second informal meeting between "Ecumenical" and "Evangelical" youth networks in November 1989. A preparatory meeting for this activity was organized by our desk in February 1989.

Resource materials which you can order from our desk:

- Report on the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering (West Bank, August 1987);
- Report on the African Lutheran Youth Leaders Conference (Zimbabwe, May 1988);
- Report on the European Lutheran Youth Conference (Czechoslovakia, October 1988)
 - a) in English
 - b) in German
- Liturgy, Justice and the Reign of Good (by Henderson, Quinn, Larson);
- Luther League Program Planning Guides (1986-88).

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

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of Carolyn Decke, Youth Intern in the LWF Assembly Office

Being with LWF already for three months I want to take advantage of the new Youth Newsletter to introduce myself.

I am 27 years old, and am preparing for the ministry in my home church, the Nordelbian Luth. Church in the northern part of the Federal Republic of Germany. I graduated in my home town Hamburg in 1988, worked there for 6 months with a Counseling and Information Center of my church, and now I work in Geneva as an intern to help prepare the LWF Assembly in Curitiba. Next year I will return to Hamburg to complete my theological education by serving as a vicar for two years.

I applied for this internship, because I want to have some experience in international church cooperation and to become acquainted with how different other (member) churches from all over the world answer theological and socio-political questions.

At the moment I work in the Publication Office, where I assist three very nice colleagues in preparing the Assembly Study Material which will be published in four languages. I do the German

editing. Soon I will begin to prepare the Steward program as I am one of the three Head Stewards representing LWF staff in Curitiba. I also try to keep in close touch with Birgitta, Julius, and Matti at the Youth Desk.

Certainly this does not cover all of my activities in Geneva, although it is an important part. I have not experienced any loneliness in Geneva, one reason being the warm welcome of my colleagues. I love music, and I try to practice it at least in a small choir. And of course the Genevois countryside is very inviting for taking trips and hiking.

This might be enough for a short introduction. I'm looking forward to getting to know some of you either at the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering or the Assembly, and I'm curious about the months to come with LWF.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

of Matti Peiponen, Youth Intern at the LWF Youth Desk

Many things have happened to me in one year since I graduated at the end of 1988 from the Theological School of the University in Helsinki and was ordained to serve as a pastor in a Lutheran congregation in Eastern Finland. However, the greatest change in my life occurred when the LWF Youth Desk informed me that I could start my internship in February 1989. I set out to prepare myself to face a global reality in my work instead of quite a small circles in the countryside congregation where I worked until I left for Geneva.

I have now been working five months on our Swedish-Slovak-Peruvian-Finnish Youth Desk team. A new country, new colleagues and foreign languages are, of course, at the same time exciting and energy consuming new elements in my daily life. Now I feel quite at home and that my place - at this very moment - is here.

Increasingly, I am more and more involved in my specific task as an intern namely, the preparation for the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Argentina which is approaching and there are still many things to do... I hope that the PAYC will be successful in bringing the message to the youth and youth workers who are involved on a congregational level, instead of just leaving a brief mention in the history of the LWF: "The PAYC was held in 1990 in Argentina". This message has to be carried by all of us, participants in the PAYC from different continents, regions, political and economical systems, minority and majority churches, etc. The message could be borne out of our concern: "What do these issues mean for us young people in a particular continent and country and for us belonging to the Christian church?" The membership in the church should push us to see the world as Jesus Christ would have seen it - with the eyes of a realist still in the light of creation and reconciliation.

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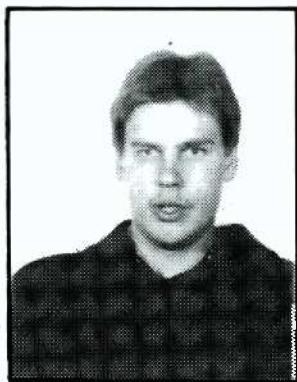
My daily life here in Geneva is somehow divided into two realities. One reality is that I am now living and working in one of the most wealthy and prosperous cities in Europe. I have come to a country which has a high living standard. However, at the same time, I am dealing in my work with the reality of increasing --both material and spiritual-- poverty in the world. A reality of people living in unjust conditions and suffering from physical and mental pain. De facto I cannot close my senses not to see or hear my neighbors' cries. What can I do amidst these realities? Which is my commitment as a Lutheran, a Christian and finally as a human being?

The main theme of the PAYC: "Do not say 'I am too young' - I will send you to..." encourages me not to give up nor to find reasons for rejecting the commitment to carry messages of hope to the world together with other young Christians and other people. Our God is not passive and He sends us to do so. This means that, although the statistical predictions show that our world is at the edge of its existence, we may let our faith incarnate into deeds in order to do our best for humankind.

During this coming year, I wish to search and try to find my Lutheran identity, whatever it means. Coming from a society which used to be imbued over centuries with Lutheran attitudes, I have difficulty in defining or even expressing what the Lutheran identity is or means. I look forward to meet and work with Lutheran Christians from different parts of the world. I hope this global approach with Lutherans can help me find both a Lutheran and a Christian identity.

The Lutheran World Federation is one of the "inhabitants" in the Ecumenical Center. I hope that during this year at the Youth Desk I will learn something about ecumenical fellowship. I also hope to become acquainted with people - my colleagues and neighbors - over national as well as social systems and confessional borders. In my mind, seeking Lutheran identity does not mean concentrating only on learning more about pure Lutheran tradition, it also means crossing barriers and moving from preoccupation with one's own faith towards a more hospitable and open Christian life.

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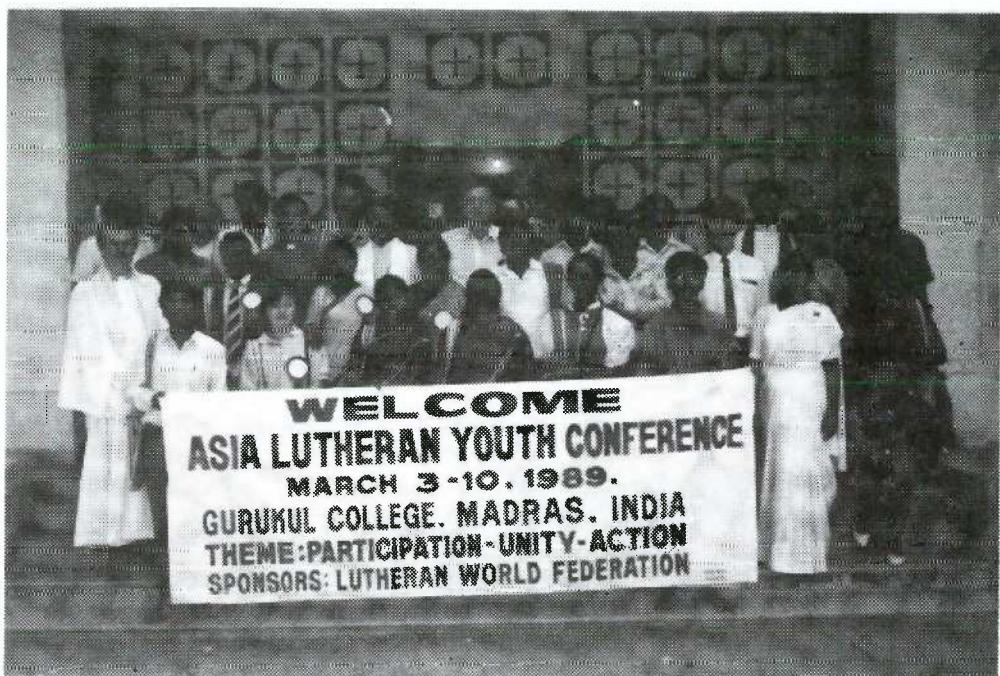
ASIAN LUTHERAN YOUTH DISCUSS RENEWAL OF WORSHIP

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By Julius Filo

A workshop was organized in Madras, India, March 3-9, within the framework of the Lutheran World Federation/Department of Church Cooperation's (LWF-DCC) Youth and Students program. The workshop centered mainly on the present situation in Asia and on what possibilities exist for revitalizing both youth through worship and worship through youth in the Lutheran congregations in Asia.

In many churches the relationship between youth and worship is a subject of hope, but also one of concern. The issue captured the attention of the LWF Seventh Assembly in Budapest, Hungary, in 1984. At that time a request was made for regional workshops on the topic to be organized.



The 23 participants from 18 Lutheran churches in Asia (the only churches not represented were those from Japan, Taiwan and the Evangelical Church in Jordan) viewed their task from different angles. They first refreshed their knowledge of the basic elements of worship as presented by the Rev. Shalem Raju, the workshop's local organizer from India, and then reflected on "Worship and Indignation" and "Worship in the Context of Socio-Economic Challenges", presented by Prof. Nirmal, a lecturer at Gurukul Theological College. They also discussed "Contextualization of Worship" with Aruna Gnanadason, also from India.

Although the speakers invited from India greatly enriched the workshop, the main source of inspiration came from the participants themselves who brought case studies to the above topics, shared their different forms of worship and meditated together during the regular evening singing of the Indian Bhajans (Christian songs with Indian folk music).



The learning of Indian Bhajans was led by this group of youth from India

From the very beginning, the workshop participants expected to find a renewal of their own worship life. They wanted not only to be enriched personally, however, but also to be able to convey some of the excitement of Madras back to other youth who were not able to attend. To ensure this, they summarized their findings under three topics, chosen to be the workshop's theme, "Participation, Unity and Action."

Youth participation in the worship life of the Lutheran congregations in Asia was their specific focus. Causes of the different approaches to worship by youth, ranging from lack of interest to active participation, were examined--for example, the generation gap; a mechanical stereotype liturgy not establishing a link to the contemporary challenges; lack of opportunity for youth to participate; lack of interest in worship. Successful solutions to this had been found in many congregations. These included: strengthening the communion between the generations within the congregation; revising the order of worship; including youth in the preparation and writing of prayers, confessions and songs; and witnessing to the gospel in new challenging ways.

More time should be spent with youth to explain the traditional components of worship, which they do not always automatically understand, the participants said. But first, they said, young people should be given a chance to regularly perform certain tasks in each congregation's worship thus enabling them to offer their talents for the benefit of all. They reported with enthusiasm on the revival of congregational communion wherever an openness toward all the generations in the congregations --including youth-- prevails. But they expressed their sadness about worship life in cases where "domination of a human kind and formalistic application of the Lutheran tradition" exist.

The topic of unity gave the participants an opportunity to illustrate the unique intention of God's mercy to make all one in his spirit within the congregation through its worship life. This effort of worship for unity encompasses not only the congregation at all levels, but encourages the

seeking of unity with other congregations locally and internationally. The groups proposed more sharing of experiences in the local setting ecumenically and regular sharing of experiences internationally, for example through the LWF.

The most challenging topic in the workshop's presentations and drafted reports was that of the interdependency between worship and action. Christian worship should lead to action toward justice and peace, participants said. This action might be in the form of evangelism, advocacy, diaconic or political engagement but it always finds motivation in worship which witnesses to the love of God for humankind.

Participants stressed that a link to a specific context and concrete socio-economic challenges must be established within worship, prayers, confession, songs and most of all, sermons, which should actualize and apply the message. The participants said that the lack of application in a sermon and in worship is a sign of sickness in our spirituality; we do not dare open up our lives to God. This kind of "safe" and "comfortable" application of worship, avoiding the burning issues of a given context, they said, resulted in lack of action in tackling the needs in Asia.

Participants spoke of challenges typical to each of their specific Asian countries which were in need of action as a sign of the motivating power of worship life. One challenge concerns "Servants" in some Christian homes, very often young people or children from poor families. In one of the worship outlines, prepared by the participants in addition to the reports of summarized findings, it was asked if these children benefit from the same chances as those in whose family they work.

Worship outlines focused on: "Peace and Justice in Asia", "The Asian Family and Worship" and "Receive Salvation and Help to Protect Life (Human Creation)". They are to be used in the churches to motivate better use of talents and a closer link to life's realities. The workshop brought together young people's reflections on worship and life in a unique way, so that it became a "response by our life to what God has already done for us", which according to the consensus of the participants is what genuine worship is.

* * * * *

REACTION ON ASIAN WORKSHOP BY ANITA SOOSAY, A PARTICIPANT:
(from a letter to the Youth Desk)

I do hope that you still remember me from the LWF Workshop on Youth and Worship in Madras. I represented the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore.

I would like to express my gratitude to you and the LWF for having given me the opportunity to participate in the workshop. I gained a wealth of knowledge from the sessions. One part really taught me a lot: Social Justice. In my country, which is developing, we are not so acutely exposed to discriminations, poverty, etc. It really opened my eyes when Prof. Nirmal presented his lecture and when we watched the video tape on Africa. Here in Malaysia, poverty as such is not so evident but we have a great deal of the homeless, orphaned, handicapped, and the workshop has opened my eyes to these situations and has given me a better understanding of how to deal with such problems.

A YOUTH GROUP FROM MALAYSIA VISITED NORTH SUMATRA, INDONESIA
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The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore (ELCMS) organized a youth group study tour to North Sumatra, Indonesia from April 3 to 10, 1989. Host church was the Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun - a Batak Lutheran Church.



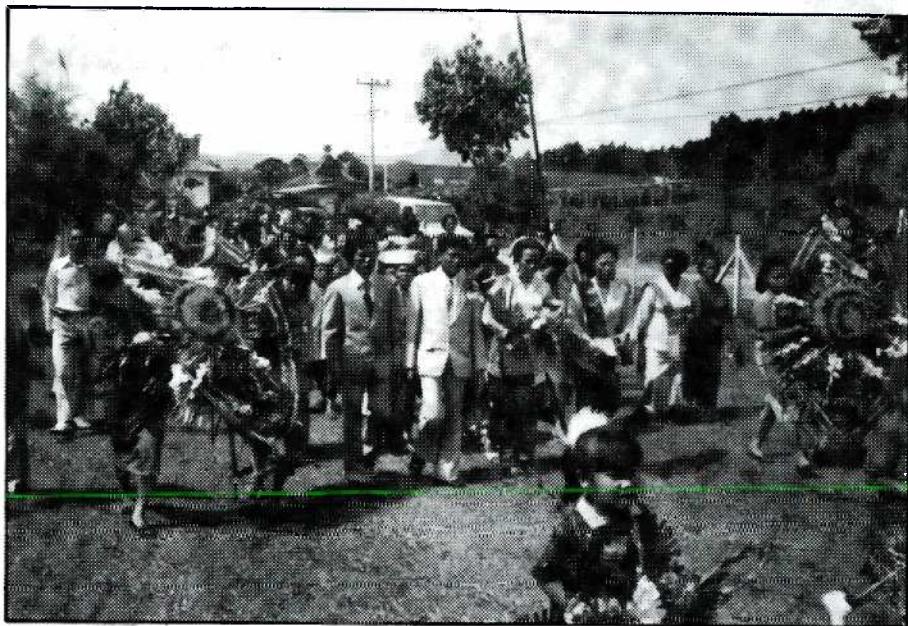
At the home of one of our hosts, Pastor Purba

The group consisted of 5 young men and 5 young women and the group leader was Rev. Benedict Muthusami, Youth Pastor of the ELCMS. The LWF Youth Desk contributed to the costs of this study tour. We have received two reflections on this visit and some pictures from the leader of the group and Anita Soosay, one of the members. From them we choose the following information:

The objectives of this program were:

- a. To provide an opportunity for the youth of the ELCMS to study and become exposed to a cross-cultural experience;
- b. To experience a little of the growth of a Lutheran sister church in a country where (similar to Malaysia) the majority are Muslims;
- c. To explore the possibilities of organizing more such study tours to sister churches within the Asian nations;
- d. To help the youth of the ELCMS establish links/relations with other youth organizations.

"The GKPS (presently counting 161,098 members) were our hosts. We stayed with them for a week, touring the North of Sumatra and visiting a few of the many GKPS churches. In the town of Berastagi, we attended a traditional Indonesian Christian wedding.

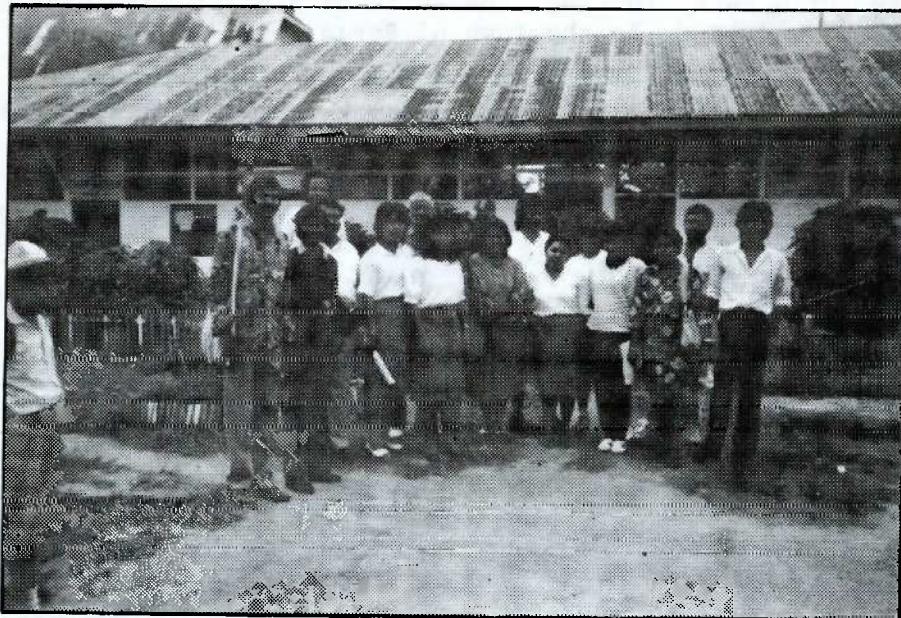


We were honored to be the guests at this wedding

We were then taken to Pematang Siantar, a town approximately 120 km from Berastagi where the main church of the GKPS is situated. The GKPS has about 180,000 members, a massive number, and this is just one small church group. About 60% of these people are farmers. Yet, they contribute so generously towards the church, funding most of the building projects. The GKPS hardly or very seldom relies on Government or foreign aid to build their churches and there are so many churches in North Sumatra. Every few yards you can find a little church nesting cozily somewhere; be it Simalungun or Batak, Anglican, Methodist or Catholic. Our hosts told us that the Simalunguns have 1 church to every 10 families and a pastor has to be in charge of 7-8 congregations.

In these churches the language medium is Simalungun, but their national language, "Bahasa Indonesia" is similar to our Malaysian language, which made communicating quite simple. The people in Indonesia are so friendly and courteous. Even the Muslims live in harmony with the Christians. There are no restrictions at all. When we visited a traditional Indonesian village, we were surprised to see a Christian and a Muslim family residing in the same house in peace and harmony.

We were also given the opportunity to meet with the students of a technical high school which GKPS sponsors. The children from less fortunate families are given the opportunity to finish their schooling and develop skills which will be of use to them in the future.



Our new friends at a Secondary School run by the GKPS

Besides visiting the churches, we also spent quite some time visiting Lake Toba which is a 56 miles long crater lake. The lake is beautiful; with clear blue water and approximately 80 meters deep. It is surrounded by mountains and right in the center of the lake there is a huge island known as the Samosir Island." (Quotation from the letter of Anita Soosay)



A boat trip on Lake Toba, the awesome majesty of God's creation

Based on the success of this study program, two more study tours are being planned by the ELCMS, using local resources and funds:

1. A visit to churches/organizations which are involved in church planting and missionary activities on the East Coast of West Malaysia. This area is predominantly rural and also has a high concentration of Muslims;
2. A visit to Thailand, a country where Christians (and even more so, Lutherans), are such a small minority.



THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE – A JOYFUL DAY INDEED!

BASEL - A SIGN OF LIVING HOPE IN EUROPE?
by Matti Peiponen, Finland

Peace with justice... these ecumenical key words decorated the city of Basel in Switzerland while the European Ecumenical Assembly gathered to speak about the future of the European continent which is carrying many kinds of controversies but where the small sings of hope are smoldering too.

The Assembly managed to convene some 10.000 people altogether. Most of them were visitors who wanted to contribute to the consiliar process by strolling around at the Workshop for the Future of Europe, queuing up to get tickets to enter into the plenary hall or taking part in the various programs organized especially for the visitors. About 850 delegates from the member churches of both the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of the European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) were busy in the working groups and with the Final Document. Youth were represented by the youth delegates and of course by the hardworking 120 stewards who had - in principal - the right to speak in plenaries and working groups.

One could say that several assemblies were taking place in Basel all the time. An assembly for delegates, another for visitors, youth, women. All these small assemblies formed THE ASSEMBLY. All these "base communities" were supposed to share the visions and commitments to the future of Europe by carrying the spirit of the Final Document to their local communities and congregations. Finally, the Final Document was accepted by the delegates. Prior to the final adoption of the document, the moderator asked people to stay in silent prayer calling "Veni Sancte Spiritus". The atmosphere must have been like the one of the ecumenical councils at the time of the undivided church ...

The Final Document was adopted with a clear majority of votes. Perhaps one reason for this unanimity can be understood on the basis of the Peace with Justice Document Process. The First draft was sent not only to the high ranking committees of the churches, but also to congregations and grassroot groups seven months before the Assembly to be discussed in light of the conciliar process. Some 500 replies were received from different instances. One working group worked out all the proposals and came up with the second draft which was forwarded to the above mentioned instances and to those who replied to the first draft. Once again people responded actively. Moreover the assembly delegates made several proposals for changes in the beginning of the convocation. The editorial group for the document wrote the proposed final document. The foreword of the respective document concludes: "...there has never been a European Ecumenical Statement based on such a broad process of consultation and discussion."

During the Youth Orientation Program which took place prior to the Assembly, the youth delegates and stewards for the Assembly expressed their opinion about the second Draft of the Document. Rather critical remarks were expressed regarding the Eurocentrism of the document. However, youth wanted to highlight that it is not up to Europeans to define and solve the problems of the world, since this was also seen as a colonialistic attitude to the global challenges. It was also discussed on whose condition the



notion of a Common European House has been understood within the document. As a youth contribution to the document, youth delegates in cooperation with stewards prepared a paragraph which was taken into consideration and was included in the proposed final document as well as in the Adopted Final Document in an edited form. Two main points in this paragraphs were:

Quotation from the Final Document proposed p. 23-24

"While we recognize that there is an idealization of youth in our societies, we believe that the reality of life for many young people is characterized by underestimation of their ability and creativity; lack of a meaningful role in society; and the deprivation of a vision of the future. ...

One reason for this is that young people are underrepresented in decision-making bodies of churches. We believe that better cooperation between the churches and youth organizations would be an important step in ameliorating the situation."

The European Youth Gathering during the Assembly, took place in a local congregation hall in Basel. Participants of the Youth Gathering and several Christian youth organizations set up a joint stand in the workshop for the future of Europe. The idea of the stand was to have two maps of Europe. One map was without any borders and colored in green on which visitors could indicate where they come from. Another map highlighted the reality in which young people are living in Europe: e.g. unemployment and the constraint to take up arms.

Youth organizations also put together one of the hearings which took place in the evenings. Hearings were open to everyone and tried to initiate discussions on topics within the framework of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. The youth hearing had the theme: "Marginalization of young people in Churches and Societies". The idea was to materialize this hearing in a creative way with music and drama. The theme "marginalization" was presented through witnesses from the different contexts where the young Europeans - more or less marginalized - are living. Although the chosen method for the hearing was materialized by the youth themselves, the hearing turned out to only give a list of the problems youth are facing, but not to find the ways to more participatory structures in our societies and churches.

Was this meeting only one of those numerous convocations which take place on our continent or was it a sign of a living hope for our European every day life? I would say that the most important achievement in this convocation was that, for the first time since the churches decided to divorce and go their own ways, Roman Catholics, Orthodox and their "descendants" came together. One result was also that the archbishops of the two Estonian Lutheran Churches, namely the Church in exile and the one in Estonia, met officially within the Assembly.

All in all, the Eastern European contribution to the Assembly was noticeable. Their messages which were colored by the new development e.g. in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary were brought to the discussions and to the Europe Market. As far as the GDR is concerned their input in the Europe Market was visible. The Eastern European participation gave quite a strong airing to the whole Assembly. They asked: "What do you

really mean with the European Common House. The common European village (as defined by the president of the European Community Jacques Delors) should be a 12-floor-block of flats or the Common European house from the Atlantic to Siberia (as defined by Mihail Gorbatschow).

In my mind another sign of hope was the walk through three countries: Switzerland, West Germany and France. Five thousand people took part in the walk with their passports, since participants were told to bring them along. Nevertheless, nobody controlled our nationalities on any border. The customs officers welcomed the participants waving their hands. To the East Europeans this event was a significant one since most of them visited the FRG and France for the first time without visa.

The Assembly closed its seven days convocation in the Ecumenical Closing Ceremonies. For one week the churches came together, but one week is not enough time to change the churches, not to mention the societies. Neither could this convocation unite the churches to share the body and blood of Christ together. Nevertheless, this was not the objective of this meeting. This was also the reason why the Assembly was closed with the ceremonies and not by a worship, divine service or liturgy. The eucharistical communion - unity - does not seem to be knocking on our church doors... yet.

The Eurovision widely broadcasted the Closing Ceremonies which were interrupted by a local punk group who wanted to announce that they had not been heard. The Assembly was full of talk about the current problems in Europe, full of many symbolical actions (three-country walk and tree planting) and full of people who are involved in decision making bodies in their churches and societies. The punks reminded the people of real and concrete actions. In my opinion, the punks' methods were not the best ones, but they made people think...



JUSTICE AND PEACE EMBRACE EACH OTHER
JUSTICE ET PAIX S'EMBRASSENT
GERECHTIGKEIT UND FRIEDEN UMARMEN SICH

European Ecumenical Assembly on Peace with Justice, 15-21 May 1989, Basel

PEACE WITH JUSTICE FOR THE WHOLE CREATION: THE CALL FOR COMMITMENT

by Sylvia Raulo, Finland (Contribution presented on behalf of the non-Catholic youth at the European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel)

No man is an island entire of itself
every man is a piece of the continent
 a part of the main
if a clod be washed away by the sea
 Europe is the less
 as well as if a promontory were
as well as if a manor of thy friends
 or thine were
 any man's death diminishes me
 because I am involved in mankind
and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls
 it tolls for thee.

(*Devotions, John Donne.*)

John Donne was an Anglican priest living in the early 17th century. He wrote these sentences while lying in his bed seriously ill. He was confronted with the idea of dying. He heard the bells tolling from the nearby church and suddenly realized that he would have to face the same destiny. There would be no way to escape, no exception, no salvation from death.

I am part of a generation who has, since the age of understanding, heard the bells tolling, lying in my bed - that is our sick continent, part of a world with even more serious illnesses. Not only are we tormented by human conflicts, oppression, violence and death, but now we are also witnessing the death of the earth, the sea and the air. I remember being a child and running under first warm spring rains that refreshed the earth and were for us the sign of summer and life. I also remember the same rain three years ago when I had to explain to the children of a friend that they were not allowed to go out or play with the water or the sand. The rain that had already started to be the acid killer of trees had turned to a radioactive rain of death to all of us.

Human conflicts have existed as long as human beings, but at least they have left some people and the environment untouched. Today we face a threat with a new quality. The bell of our time tolls for everybody. There will be no possibility to start again after we have destroyed the ecological conditions for life. No piece of the world will escape this reality.

The commitment of the Church for peace with justice, for the integrity of creation should start from this clearness of mind, this acknowledging of facts and a true repentance, a humble confession of sins. The churches have been part of the human failure to cultivate and guard the earth. They are part of an unjust economical system and even promote it.

The churches being part of the world, this might sound natural. After all, it is very difficult to live in the human community without being linked to it. The problem is that injustice, oppression and the pitiless exploitation of the creation are not some sort of an accident to torture the humanity. They are the fruit of carefully made plans, they are closely interlinked and they

are serving the interests of the same people. They are not a bad dream that will go away once the morning comes.

The churches are not, however, only passively involved in unjust structures, but they have their own sins to confess as well. The confession is still named as being part of wars and conflicts in Europe today, many of us have experienced situations where the cohabitation of different Christians' denominations is extremely difficult, not to mention the inner structures of many of our congregations.

When confronted with these problems it is seen as normal for the churches to try to solve them identifying themselves with those in power - or trying to become this power themselves. The churches seem to have forgotten that the power of the church is not from this world. So we stay silent, waiting for the bells to stop tolling.

The Church is not the possessor of earthly truths; it doesn't have a better answer to the green-house phenomenon or the foreign debt crisis of some countries than economists or scientists have. But it should be continuously ready to follow the ongoing debates, negotiations and decisions taken. It should be in continuous dialogue with those people who work with the questions of our time, promoting an ethical debate, talking with specialists as well as with people at the grassroot level in organizations and groups, working with those who are involved in power structures, but it would be more important to listen to those who experience the consequences of the decisions taken. Being in dialogue doesn't mean accepting everything, but means challenge and when needed raising its voice to give the perspective, the values and the criteria for a true development.

The churches often seem to be able to make moral judgments on the behavior of individuals - however, when confronted with the problems of communities there is suddenly no criteria found. To me this is only an excuse to avoid a serious intellectual effort.

This effort needs a space of discussion inside the Church which is possible only if the right to express controversial opinions is respected. Intellectual freedom is a necessary element of intellectual honesty. And what the churches desperately need now is an honest exchange of ideas.

However, these ideas and the intellectual honesty need to be embodied. Because the Church is not an idea but a body, living and real. But is the life of the churches affected by the questions of our time? How do our communities and congregations take up the challenges of our time?

It is common to picture the average European Christian as middle class, politically and morally conservative. It is a one-sided picture, but our communities are like that, at least in the Western part of our continent. This situation is considered as something normal although what it actually means is that the widest part of our societies are left out. What we are living is a broken community. The consciousness of this is growing, but the answer has been the wrong one. The inclusion of different groups very often takes the form of social action. Thus the marginalized people may become objects of social action but their concerns leave the community untouched. Youth is the future of the Church we hear, but when it claims the right for a presence it becomes a problem. Churches provide armies with ministers but very few give places for those who want to make a civil service. People who love people of their own gender are still not accepted in their communities. The list of broken branches of the tree is endless. So the efforts of the

communities to build a more inclusive community are hopeless, if they do not understand that opening to others means being touched, it means changing, it means that there has to be space for new things that often challenge the old patterns. A community satisfied to be centered only in itself has in my eyes a strange notion of community.

God is the example par excellence of communion. We confess that we believe in the Holy Trinity, three in one God. There is a famous icon of Rublev that gives us an idea of what this communion can be. In this icon three angels are sitting around a table. They are bending their heads and bodies towards each other so that you can almost see the movement. It goes from one to another and to the third. A perfect harmony between the three, this is the way of love in the communion, the movement of leaning to the next person and receiving the other one. But on the table in the middle of this harmony there is a calice with the head of a calf in it. That is the offer, the sacrifice. And suddenly this icon makes us remember what really happened. God, the perfect harmony and love opens himself to be judged and to be killed by those he came to save. There was a love of a Father offering the Son and the Son accepts the cross for the sake of the world. It is not a communion that finds strength in closing itself.

This is the love our communities should live. A love that is nourished in the communion with others and lives; a love that is incarnated in giving itself to others. The Holy Eucharist is a continuous presence of this reality in the Church. The tragedy of the Church is that this mystery of communions has become in the minds of many people a symbol of separation. This is a false idea, because the roots of our division are elsewhere. But it is one more sign of a broken community of Christians. Thus the work for the reconciliation in the human community cannot be separated from the efforts to restore the unity of the Church.

A commitment means thinking, working, acting, loving - and praying. Praying means not only pledging God and asking but also listening to the word of God, receiving it. There has often been a need to change the traditional prayers in order to include issues of concern in them. A friend of mine from Latin America commented on them once: "I wonder why you Europeans invent new prayers all the time. For me the "Our Father" is enough. It is very simple but I really think what I pray every morning: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven." Can you pray anything more, anything more powerful?"

Are we really ready to change towards the will of God? I wonder how much would be left if God's will did happen, not only in our societies but also in the churches, not to mention our lives. Thus the problem is not so much in the words which we pray but in the fact that we pray many times half-heartedly, if at all. I suppose we need God. Back in our churches, we need a Church that believes and lives what it proclaims and prays. Hence there is a need for a spiritual renewal of the Church, so that it could pray truly, trusting God. We might start praying "Thy will be done" not only with our mouth but taking it so seriously, letting it transform us so that the Church becomes a living prayer itself. A commitment is never a series of reasonable actions. It is a spiritual journey that cannot leave any part of the Church untouched. We have to trust enough in God and not only in our human resources, or we will still end up with a Church holding truths or being silent, but anyway closed to discussion, we will have communities excluding others, prayers becoming rituals. We will have a Church centered to itself and committed only to itself. A Church I wouldn't like to call a Church.

The way of commitment is not an easy one. So what? I wonder sometimes where the joy has disappeared from the churches. With joy I don't mean entertainment but the kind of joy that grows from the sense of commitment, from the discovery that when working and living with others, when seeking to live the will of God, something new is born. The Bible says that those who want to save their lives will actually loose it. This is the foolishness we have to seek for. Where have we lost the notion that the Gospel is good news? These news which are supposed to speak about salvation, life overcoming death - without forgetting the suffering, the doubts, the death. The entire Bible is telling about the promise of God to the people, the possibility we have of living the adventure of the children of God. This I see as our way, the joy of serving with the mind, the heart and the spirit. This is the vision I have of the Church committed to peace, to justice, to the integrity of creation. But how to put this into practice?

Well, coming back to the sick man in his bed, I am thinking of Jesus. He had a good attitude when confronted with complicated situations. He said to the sick man lying in his bed: "Take your bed and go".... For those having sleeping bags or mattresses on the floor this is certainly much easier than those who have waterbeds.

Nevertheless - whatever your bed is like - God bless your journey.

* * * * *



(Distributed in Basel at the LWF stand which was organized by the Youth Desk in the "Workshop for the future of Europe")

LWF YOUTH MESSAGE
TO THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY
ON PEACE WITH JUSTICE IN BASEL

Dear friends,

It is our pleasure to realize that you and we (youth workers engaged in the coordination of youth programs of the Lutheran World Federation) are joining hands in support of the objectives of the JPIC process in Europe.

We are, through our national and international activities and programs, supportive of general and specific goals of peace work in Europe:

- Europe without nuclear and chemical weapons;
- radical decrease of military expenses, troops and conventional weapons and therefore the success of the Vienna talks;
- the East-West intensified cooperation on the issues of protection of environment and for educational programs, legal measures and personal commitment to the protection of human life (e.g. unborn life, rights of children); and
- the possibility to choose civil service instead of military service as a way leading to peace.

All of this could be better promoted if Europe became in a better way our "common house". This needs the support of us Christians to become a reality. In this "common house", new ways of cooperation between nations and new participatory structures in the respective countries could be powerful instruments of our common efforts for peace in Europe and globally. We know that our common European peace with justice could contribute to the alleviation of the suffering of deprived individuals and indebted nations of the Southern hemisphere and to "dismantle" the dependence creating structures between South-North and East-West.

All of this belongs to our dreams, worshipping: preaches and prayers.

But at the same time we want to share with you our conviction that we, each one of us, have to assume our concrete responsibility on this way to peace with justice for humankind and nature. What does our Christian faith motivate us to do?

The Youth and Students Program of the Lutheran World Federation recently enabled one activity in Europe as a contribution to this process. This activity took place in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, on September 30 - October 11, 1988. The theme was: Ways leading to peace.

The focus of the discussions and strategy was:

- the role of evangelization in the peace work
- European churches and the global economical justice
- minorities in our midst

- role of the contacts among Christian youth across the East-West division in Europe
- the role of the youth work of the churches in the peace movement
- attitude to the present peace initiatives
- the role of civil service (as an alternative to the military service) in peace work

(You can learn about the findings of this activity and commitments expressed by the representatives of our youth from the documents of the above meeting)

We pray for the success of the JPIC process so that it will become a blessing and reality for Europe and for the whole world.

Geneva, May 10, 1989.

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PEN FRIENDS:

The youth of the Faith Lutheran Church in Canada would like to have international "pen pals". If you are interested you can write to the following address:

Faith Lutheran Church
c/o Rev. Ron Bestvater
44 William St. W.,
Oshawa, Ont. L1G 1J9
Canada

YOUTH OF LATIN AMERICAN CHURCHES WANT TO BENEFIT FROM AN INTERNATIONAL SHARING - report by Julius Filo on meeting with youth attending the Latin American Pre-Assembly

A group of 13 youth representatives of Latin American churches was invited to be part of the Pre-Assembly of Latin American churches in Bogota, Colombia, May 15-20, 1989. The group was composed of youth delegates and stewards to the 8th LWF Assembly in Curitiba 1990.



Although some churches did not use this possibility (4 churches were not represented) a group of 12 youth/youth leaders from 6 member churches had several enthusiastic encounters during the breaks of the above Pre-Assembly and on May 20 after the end of the meeting. The youth addressed the following message to the Latin American Pre-Assembly:

* * * * *

"With the certitude that we belong to the church here gathered and that we are part of the Latin American Communion of Churches, we wish to share with you our work, conversations and our work-goals.

First of all, we would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity of being here and for giving us the chance to meet. Unfortunately, we weren't many gathered in Bogota. Our brothers from Mexico, Venezuela, Guinea and Surinam were absent; therefore, we were only about twelve participants. In spite of this, we continued with the meeting and we still have one more day, tomorrow Saturday, which will surely be our most intense journey.

What have we done during this meeting? Which has been our theme?
What have we talked about? What have we planned?

I wish to summarize it in the following way:

- 1) We have succeeded in having a deep interchange about the youth life situation in our countries. We have learned about the Colombian, Brazilian, Argentinean, Chilean, Bolivean and El Salvadorian reality. This has been of great help for us, it enabled us to deepen into the life conditions of our Latin American brothers and sisters.
- 2) We have exchanged experiences about youth work in our own churches. We have learned about group structures, youth ministry, coordination, councils, etc.
- 3) We have confirmed the great similarity between the youth situation in all the Latin American continent. This has urged us to share, communicate and to mutually take advantage of the work we carry out in our own churches.
- 4) There was a great anxiety to organize a South American Youth Assembly. This would take place after the General Assembly in Curitiba.
- 5) At the same time, we found out that we must, first-of-all, reinforce our local youth work. This is not only a challenge for our local churches but also for us, the young. We must create for the youth work new methods, at a national level, which must be supported by our churches.
- 6) In this context and to support this work, we believe that we must put great emphasis on our youth training in order to enable them to assume their responsibilities as leaders.

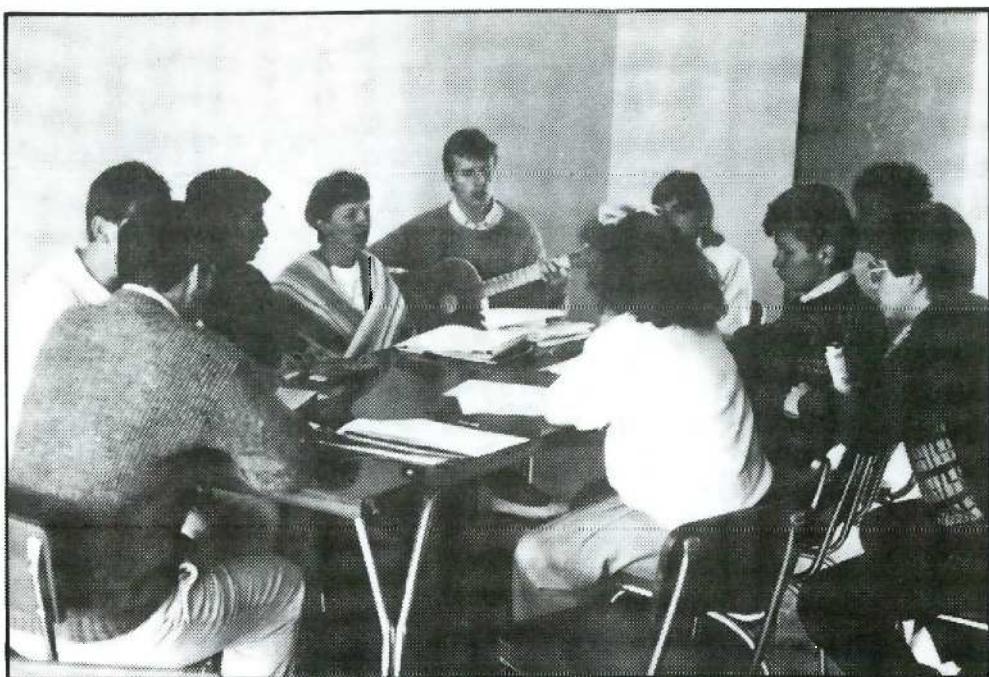
We plan to deepen and clarify these points tomorrow and specially in the PAYC in Buenos Aires for which we are being prepared for here in Bogota.

I wish to express that we have followed the deliberations of this Pre-Assembly meeting in Bogota with great interest and gratitude.

With a fraternal spirit of being one body and one church, we would like to bring to your attention a fact that worries us:

Yesterday we have heard the conclusions and proposals of this Assembly to the LWF. We hope that these conclusions won't be taken as if we were putting into the hands of the LWF problems that concern us and should be solved, first of all, in our Continent. We must not forget that we possess here a great potential of human resources. We also have our own theology.

About the concrete case of the proposal to study the theme of the Ecclesiology we also have theological faculties and theologians. We have our own experiences as a church. These are great resources. Let's study here about this theme and then share it with our sister churches! It is right to demand for help from the LWF, but we also must demand it from ourselves. Let's cooperate with what we have. We, the Latin American youth, are convinced that we have a lot to cooperate with." (Presented by Martin Junge, Chile, on behalf of the youth representatives)

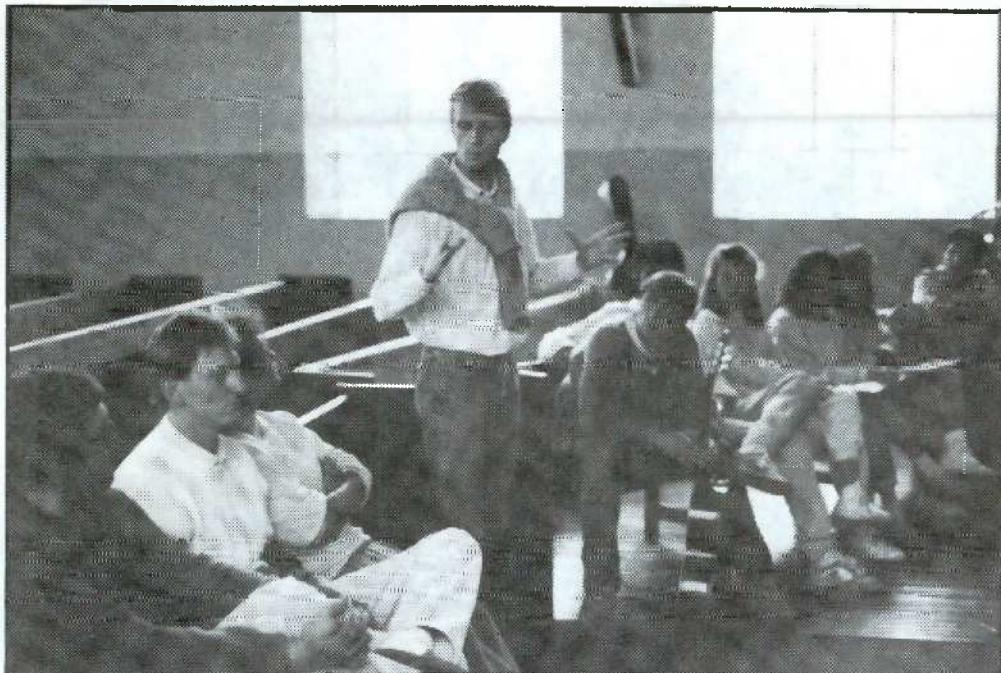


During the time dedicated to the planning of Latin American youth cooperation in the future, several commitments were expressed by the youth present. They agreed on the following:

1. Through personal efforts, they will look locally for effective ways of strengthening the youth ministry of their respective churches on the congregational and national levels. This should e.g. happen through programs aiming at youth leadership training. It was also agreed that a renewal of youth work will be achieved through strengthening of the personal commitment of youth to Jesus Christ.
2. Martin Junge from Chile, Casilla 15167, Santiago, (who kindly accepted this voluntary assignment) will be collecting information from the Latin American churches on their youth work (as sent to him by youth leaders) and distribute this information to the youth representatives present in this meeting and those who were involved in the LWF in previous years. This will help to give new incentives for the growth of the youth ministry in the churches.
3. Finally the participants agreed to collectively prepare a regional youth conference in January 1991 (such an idea has already been endorsed by the presidents of the Latin American Lutheran Churches but did not materialize due to the lack of local organizers for such a meeting). This activity will serve for strategizing of youth cooperation in this region. The preparation will be carried out mainly by youth leaders in the region themselves. The LWF is kindly asked to assist in such an undertaking and offer necessary expertise by staff: Plans for this first representative meeting of Latin American youth will be worked out in detail in the next future by correspondence (by the youth workers of Latin America) and finalized during the PAYC in Argentina, January 1990.

We pray for new fruits of youth ministry in our churches in Latin America.

PICTURES from a meeting with the youth of Bogotá's congregations on May 20, 1989:



Rev. Martin Junge, Chile, explains the goals of Latin American co-operation of the Lutheran youth



For the future cooperation it is important to establish personal friendships through songs, prayers and fellowship

**STATEMENT ON CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES OCCUPIED
BY ISRAEL (LWI 18/89)**

JERUSALEM, May 11--Since the Palestinian uprising began in December 1987, Israeli authorities have continuously issued military orders to close schools in the Occupied Territories, especially in the West Bank, for security reasons. The uprising, known as the Intifada, has claimed more than 500 lives. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan (ELCJ) and its overseas partners expressed their concern for the welfare of Palestinian children in the following statement issued April 27 about the closure of schools in the Israeli-occupied territories:

Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan (ELCJ) and the Coordinating Committee of Overseas Partners of the ELCJ (COCOP) meeting here April 25-27, have again been forcefully reminded of the wide-spread incidences of human rights violations perpetrated against the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation authorities. The consequent pain and suffering of the Palestinian people has been well documented and the ELCJ and COCOP representatives request the prayers of international and national churches and church organizations who look with hope toward the time when Jews, Christians and Muslims will live together with security and national rights for all.

However, because of their long history of concern for a support of education for all Palestinian people, the ELCJ and COCOP representatives wish, especially at this time, to communicate to international and national churches and church organizations their particular concern and alarm about the fact that over the past 16 months, Israeli authorities have denied approximately 300,000 Palestinian children (or about 40 percent of the population of the occupied territories) the fundamental human right to receive an education.

The ELCJ and COCOP representatives wish to express their strong support of the 1987 Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee's Viborg Statement which clearly recognizes that the Palestinian people have the right to "raise their children and bring forth the fruits of their labors without fear."

Additionally, the right to receive an education is confirmed by a number of internationally recognized laws, among them: the IV Geneva Convention of 1949, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to education... technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."

Because of what the Israeli authorities describe as "security considerations," this fundamental right to obtain an education is no longer available to students in the occupied territories--excluding the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

Beyond closing the schools, Israeli military personnel have commandeered school facilities for use as temporary detention centers, and have destroyed and vandalized school property--actions also in violation of international law.

The ELCJ and COCOP representatives wish to point out that the Israeli rationale for closing the schools because of security reasons is not only contrary to international law, but in fact inflicts a form of collective punishment upon the Palestinian community. Foremost among the arguments supporting this view is the fact that Israeli authorities have denied students the right to study in their homes.

When concerned parents and teachers attempted to prepare study materials and teach small classes of five to 10 students in private homes, these classes were raided by the military authorities. Teachers and students were threatened, arrested or detained.

Recently the Israeli government prevented the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) from distributing teaching materials to the first three elementary grades for home study programs.

In the face of such restrictions, all concerned persons must first ask: How can small groups of Palestinian children studying in private homes constitute a threat to Israeli security? And second, if security is such a primary concern, why are the schools open in East Jerusalem and especially in the Gaza Strip where violent clashes with students have been far more prevalent than in other parts of the occupied territories?

Above all, the ELCJ and COCOP representatives are concerned for the welfare and future of Palestinian students who are being deprived of their right not only to study, but study in a systematic fashion.

Educational experts agree that some early years of primary education are more critical than others. Particularly vulnerable to the effects of study interruptions are young students who are either in the process of learning, or have yet to learn to read. Interrupting their systematic curriculum at such a point may permanently threaten their ability to become literate.

Additionally, there is the concern about entire classes being prevented from beginning their educational process at the appointed time.

Each year approximately 35,000 Palestinian students should enter first grade. How will the quality of their learning be affected when after one or two years of school closure, not 35,000 but 70,000 first graders seek to enter understaffed and under-equipped schools?

It is clear that if the schools are not opened, the learning potential of an entire Palestinian generation will be placed in jeopardy.

Furthermore, if a just peace is to be established between Israelis and Palestinians, the loss of two, three or more years of Palestinian education will create a "knowledge gap" between people who, it is hoped, will share the land of Israel/Palestine and live as neighbors enjoying all the commercial, educational and cultural organizations to:

1. Directly contact representatives of the Israeli government in their respective countries and request that all schools now closed in the occupied territories be immediately opened.
2. Contact the nearest United Nations mission or agency to protest Israel's refusal to allow UNRWA reaching materials to be distributed for home study.
3. Request that their governments reconsider official cultural and educational exchange programs with the state of Israel if it fails to recognize the Palestinian community's fundamental right to provide education for its children.

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PLUS can mean a lot of things.
Nice, important, funny things...
It can be an abbreviation for
something...

For instance:

Peace & Liberty, Understanding & Sharing
Prayer Life, Urging Stillness
Please Let Us Sing



PLUS is also the name of the international youth mission happening in Jyväskylä this summer.

Place: Huhtasuo Parish Center in Jyväskylä
Time: August 11 - 13, 1989
Arrangers: The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
Jyväskylä City Congregation

The PLUS-Festival is meant for young people, students and young grown-ups. International participation is welcome. It will focus on Christian mission.

Themes:

- the growth of the individual Christian and the congregation
- the protection of the Christ-vine and its branches
(the annual theme 1989 for the church's youth work is ecology)
- spreading stillness
- church service life

Main speaker: Simon Chow from Hong Kong

Official languages: Finnish, Swedish and English

Price: FIM 190,-- for the weekend, including program, lodging and meals.

Before the PLUS-Festival an International Work Camp is arranged in Vesala Parish Center in Jyväskylä 3-16.8.1989. There we will discuss questions related to mission, ways of living and ecology. Those who are attending the camps will also be participating in setting up the PLUS-Festival. The number of participants of the international work camp is maximum 30.

Price: FIM 500,-- all included
Official languages: Finnish, Swedish and English

Jyväskylä is an active college and industrial town in central Finland with 80,000 inhabitants, situated on the north shore of Lake Päijänne, the second biggest lake in Finland.

Contact persons and addresses:

Pertti Poutanen, Youth Department
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
P.O. Box 154
SF-00140 Helsinki
Finland (Tel. 9-0-12971)

Jukka Ruotsalainen
Jyväskylä City Congregation
P.O. Box 103
SF-40100 Jyväskylä
Finland (Tel. (9)41-216811)

NEWS RELEASE No. 2, February 1989

of the Lutheran Student Movement National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC)
by Sybille Buchberger

On behalf of the Lutheran Student Movement (LSM) National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC), I greet you! I hope that each of you is well, despite an all too long and far too blustery winter. I am Sybille Buchberger, External Affairs spokesperson on the NCC, writing to tell you the latest happenings of the LSMC.

At the time of this writing, the NCC has met three times, once in Paris, Ontario, at the annual conference, once in Calgary, and once in Montreal. One of the key issues which we have been addressing is the future of campus ministry within the Lutheran Church. Our key focus is communication; both with LSM alumni, and with Lutheran youth. Part of the vision which we hold for a strong campus ministry is that in each local LSM there will be a dedicated authority/spokesperson who will generate and perpetuate the feeling of national identity, primarily through communication about national projects, and common local themes. We believe very firmly that the Lutheran Church and the LSM are mutually interdependent. We support and nurture each other, and we must keep this process active and alive.

The LSM is very excited about its project theme this year; the Environment. In so many minute and enormous ways, the gravity of the environmental issue which face us becomes ever clearer. Our projects co-ordinator, Denise Onysko, distributed a projects packet to all the locals, dealing primarily with the worldwide destruction of rainforests. This rather specific topic has a universal underlying theme. It delineates very clearly the attitude of humankind towards natural resources, and the earth

which sustains us. The packet has provided powerful food for thought, and has helped the locals to focus their thinking, and their actions concerning environmental problems.

This action has taken many forms, including potluck suppers, guest speakers, special worship services and periodic retreats to mull it all over, and rejoice in the positive actions that are being taken.

Finally, on a lighter note, (indeed, I would venture to say a positively buoyant note) the 1989 National LSM Conference is crystallizing into reality, and the plans sound fantastic! The theme will be the Four Elements: Wind, Water, Fire, and Earth, following the annual projects theme. It will be held in the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Many outdoor activities are planned, to give us an opportunity to truly participate with one another, and with our natural surroundings. It will be communal, spiritual, profound, celebratory! For more information, please contact the Conference Co-ordinator, James Hendrickssen, 1455-72 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 0B3. If you have even an inkling of time and desire, please please come. I know it will be worth it!

I'm rambling beyond the proper parameters of news release, into the realm of long-and-rather-wordy essay. I wish you all much joy, and warmer temperatures.

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NEWS FROM THE LUTHERAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP IN LIBERIA

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submitted by Robert Gonoe, National President, LYF

Over 60 young people met in the settlement of Millsburg on November 3-6 last year to commemorate the 5th Assembly of the Monrovia District Lutheran Youth Fellowship. Millsburg is the birth place of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, where a small parish still meet today. It is some 40 miles outside of Monrovia. The Assembly heard reports on the 1988 activities and elected new officers for a two year period. There were speakers and Bible study leaders working to prepare the young people for tomorrow's Lutheran church.

In the north of Liberia, the Lofa District LYF met for its third Annual Convention on November 25-27, 1988 in the town of Konia. This was another exciting time in our youth work in this area of the Lutheran Church in Liberia with over 100 young people attending. There was singing and dancing, Bible studies and sharing. The Bible study was held by the host pastor, Rev. Togba Songu. New officers were also elected for this district, and Bro. John Takai was re-elected President. The National President of the LYF who was invited to this convention could not attend due to bereavement. Plans were made for 1989 and the new officers were installed on the last day of the Convention. Pastor Songu urged the officers not to only hold titles, but to be God's loving and caring people for the group, to be committed and hardworking.

Such district gatherings are held annually, usually about the same time of the year.

The January Camp, sponsored by the LCL, was held on January 16-29 at camp KP. One of the speakers was Mrs. Sue B. Telewoda who spoke on the "Role of the Girls/Women in the Ministry/Church". The Youth Committee had been asked to include this topic as per our discussions in Zimbabwe last year at the African Lutheran Youth Leaders Conference (organized in 1988 by the LWF Youth Desk - editor's remark). We had decided to encourage women participation in all activities of the church. We believe that the women will make the moves if they are told about their own importance.

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REACTION FROM A READER:

"I'm a student at the University of Yaoundé in Cameroun. I'm a faithful reader of your "Youth Newsletter" since 1983. I'm very interested in the kind of articles you produce. Being myself a Christian of the Lutheran Church, I feel concerned about the problems that you face as faithful and obedient Christians in the European society. Those problems are mostly ours also here within the Camerounian youth. I've learned many things that changed my life and my way of viewing and living a dynamic Christian life in my community."

Djabbo Emmanuel, Cameroun

YOUTH REPORT 1988
WESTERN DEANERY OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE
by Morgan Mahlungu

Leadership Development (18-26 August 1988) Manama

We had a Leadership course at Manama highlighting the Leading systems. The following are a few themes that we dealt with during the course:

- Theology of Liberation
- Faith Healing
- Charismatic Theology
- Objectives and standards of youth work
- Worship and Liturgy
- Health care
- Practical planning
- Camping

All themes were dealt with in full from various sources from church and society. We also saw a video of the 1984 Budapest gathering. This emphasized the point of the big family of God and the worldwide youth activities. The above course is phase one. Phase two will take place in August 1989.

Zezane Youth Gathering (9-14 December 1988)

Our theme was: "Salvation through Confession, Justification by Faith" (Romans 10:10).

Our theme resulted from two themes we had. The first one was "Salvation through Confession" --meaning no confession, no salvation-- hence, the Holy Spirit leads us to confession --then, no confession, no Holy Spirit--. This became a great challenge for the campers.

Some themes which we dealt with were:

- "Behold the Lamb of God..." John 1:29
- The Cross of Calvary
- The Birth of Christ (Advent)
- Rivers of Living Waters - John 4:13-14
- Faith
- numerous Bible studies

Actually, the camp had about 600-700 youth participants. It was a different kind of camp; it also included outdoor activities such as voluntary community work, Evangelism ref.: theme and excursions. The 12 parishes of the Deanery usually fellowship together.

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REACTION FROM A READER:

"Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Thank you very much for your Christian magazine. Your magazine has helped me a great deal; it helped me forget my problems. It is one of the most precious magazines that I have every received. I got many good lessons out of reading our magazine, which is very interesting and encouraging." - Tezera Wolde Medhin, Ethiopia

N E W S I N B R I E F
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BRAZIL LWI 23/89)

In Brazil 25 million children and youth under the age of 18 live in poverty. This was stated in a survey carried out by the Statistical Bureau in Rio de Janeiro. About 11,5 million of children and youth live in "extreme poverty".

The survey, supported by UNICEF, further showed that 60,2% of all children under the age of one year live in apartments without any kind of sanitary facilities. In addition, the number of youth under the age of 18 is decreasing steadily. In 1981 they were still 44,7 %, but in the meantime, they have decreased to only 42,6%.

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BRAZIL (Information on World Conflicts)

In Brazil there is a "Holocaust by Instalments" on the Indian population. The attention and solidarity of the whole world is necessary to secure the survival of about 180 Indian communities and the remaining 200.000 Indians still alive. Bishop Erwin Kräutler, President of the Council of Indian Mission (CIMI) of the Brazilian Catholic Church expressed this opinion to the edp. In the Amazone area, Indians are especially at risk due to the presence of big international prospectors and also by the invasion of gold miners and timber traders in their region.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (EPD)

According to a recent survey, 200.000 school children between the ages of 10 and 15 have already had experiences with spiritism and occultism. Most of them (72%) declare that they lack a meaning in life, 20% are looking for a new identity and 15% simly wanted to "participate in the experience".

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The Advisory Committee on Youth of the LWF National Committee in the FRG had a meeting on April 8-9, 1989 in Fulda. In addition to the members of the committee, the youth delegates of the LWF member churches in the FRG to the 8th LWF Assembly in Curitiba attended. The meeting was convened in order to provide information on the current preparatory process for the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) in Argentina, the restructuring of

the LWF, the recent activities organized by the LWF Youth Desk and the situation of youth work in different regional churches in Germany. The LWF Youth Desk intern, Matti Peiponen, attended on behalf of the Youth Desk.

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FINLAND (Kotimaa)

"Asfaltii repeää" - Church Youth Festival on May 19-21, 1989 in Helsinki

The biggest annual event of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland gathered several thousand young people, including representatives of the Finnish Orthodox Church, under the theme "Break the Asphalt" in Helsinki. For the first time in 50 years there were also participants from Estonia, USSR. This time the festival focused on environmental issues. Gospel music groups sang about the need to safeguard nature. The theme of the worship service was "Noah's Ark". A declaration, in no way negative, but in favor of the preservation of nature was signed by thousands of young people and given to the state authorities. The signatories to the declaration, committed themselves to use their efforts to improve the environment, e.g. instead of using private cars to use public transportation.

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FRANCE (LWI)

Paris, June 15 -- The first Lutheran youth convention here took place May 20 to 21 with about 50 delegates from parishes in the Paris area. Each church sent two delegates aged between 15 and 20, and one adult representative, to discuss the theme "Young and Old in One Church."

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GUYANA

The Lutheran Church of Guyana organizes its annual Youth Camp from August 7 to 12, 1989. Youth from the Lutheran Church in Suriname will also participate. The theme of the Youth Camp '89 will be: "The Lord Is Calling Me" based on Jeremiah 1:4-10, and the work will focus on ways and means of answering God's call to mission.

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HUNGARY (LWI 11/89)**Conscientious objectors to get non-military choice in Hungary**

Social service will be introduced as an alternative to military service in Hungary when a new law comes into effect July 1. Conscientious objectors and pacifists who do not wish to train in the use of weapons will, in future, be able to choose between service in a non-combative sector of the military or serve in hospitals and other social institutions. The last two forms of service will last longer than the regular military training. All those who would have been sentenced for their refusal to do military service on grounds of their pacifist ideals were released March 1.

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POLAND

The next European Meeting of Taizé will take place in Wroclaw, Poland on December 28, 1989 - January 2, 1990. The theme will be: "Pilgrimage of Trust on Earth". The program will include meetings in small groups, visits to people with an involvement in the local area, two common prayers each day in city-center churches and workshops on different themes.

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SWITZERLAND (LWI 12/89)

Five hundred and forty-eight conscientious objectors refused to serve in Switzerland's armed forces in 1988. Swiss law allows for a period of imprisonment of between three days and three years for refusing to do military service.

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UNITED NATIONS (LWI 12/89)

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has proposed that the avoidance of military service should become a legal right in each of the 159 UN member states. According to the UN, conscientious objectors have a legal right not to serve in the military in only 21 countries.

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USA

About 100 young people from 60 countries met in a youth meeting for the first time prior to the Conference on Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. The theme of the youth meeting was: "Risking

obedience". The meeting took place on May 18 - 21, 1989 in the Trinity University of San Antonio, Texas and dealt mainly with the North-South conflict. The youth encouraged each other to become more active in their churches and understood their role as catalysts for missionary and social engagement which aims at peace and justice.

The results of the youth meeting were brought to the plenary of the Conference. The young people attended the Conference on Mission and Evangelism either as delegates or as stewards. Most of them came from Third World countries.

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USSR (KIPA)

Moscow/London 13. February -- In the Soviet Union a Christian newspaper for children has been published for the first time. According to information from the British East-Institute "Keston College" the unofficial publication entitled "Krug" (circle) was published in Leningrad. The first issue dealt with Christmas.

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YUGOSLAVIA (IDL 05/89)

A few weeks ago the Yugoslavian Government decided to change the law regarding military service and enable conscripts, who object to military training with weapons, to choose a training without weapons. There were 70 votes for and 40 against this decision.

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REACTION FROM A READER:

"Why don't you print the newsletter on recycled paper?
(Elke Andrae, FRG)

EDITOR'S REMARK:

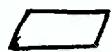
We would very much like to do so, but unfortunately recycled paper is much more expensive than the paper we use and our budget is limited. Hopefully recycled paper will become less expensive in the future and then we will consider this proposal.

YOUTH NEWSLETTER ADDRESS UPDATE :

NAME:

Old address:

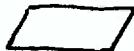
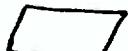
(If possible attach old address label)

1. I have a **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**. My new address is:

.....

.....

.....(Please write legible, otherwise we cannot send the Youth Newsletter to you!)

2. Please **DISCONTINUE** sending the Youth Newsletter to me3. Please **ADD** the following people to your mailing list:
(use separate sheet if necessary)

Name:

Address:

.....

Name:

Address:

.....

PLEASE RETURN TO: LWF Youth Desk,
 P.O. Box 2100
 1211 Geneva 2
 Switzerland